ALL-NEW MARVEL NOW!

HICKMAN WALKER MARTIN

022

PREVIOUSLY IN NEW AVENGERS

THERE HAVE BEEN A SERIES OF CONTRACTIONS SMASHING TWO UNIVERSES LIKE EACH OF OURS TOGETHER AT THE INCURSION POINT: EARTH. EITHER BOTH EARTHS ARE DESTROYED OR ONE IS SACRIFICED, SPARING BOTH UNIVERSES.

WHAT PLANS COULD ANYONE HAVE FOR SOMETHING LIKE THIS?

WE HAVE A BOMB THAT CAN DESTROY A PLANET.

WHY DOES THE ATLANTEAN STILL BREATHE? WHY HAVEN'T YOU KILLED HIM YET? WHY HAVEN'T YOU DONE WHAT YOU PROMISED? BLOOD DEMANDS BLOOD, T'CHALLA. DO YOUR DUTY.

I AM TRYING TO SAVE MY PEOPLE, FATHER--THAT IS MY DUTY! I BELIEVE NAMOR HAS A PURPOSE. AND UNTIL THAT PURPOSE HAS BEEN FULFILLED--HE WILL HAVE MY MERCY.

MERCY? MERCY? MY FOOLISH SON, FOR A KING...EVERY MOMENT OF MERCY IS A TRAGEDY.

REED, I...I TRIED, BUT I...

YOU *CHOSE*, T'CHALLA. AND NOW, MY CHOICE: YOU ARE DEAD TO US ALL. YOU ARE NO BLACK PANTHER. YOU ARE NO LONGER MY SON.

YOU COULDN'T DESTROY A WORLD, LIKE THE REST OF US. WE GOT TO THE END OF OURSELVES AND FOUND THERE WERE THINGS WE WOULD NOT DO.

HOW DARE YOU PUT YOUR LIVES--YOUR DAMNED MORALS--ABOVE THE LIVES OF EVERY LIVING THING? NOW WATCH...

...AS I DO WHAT YOU COULD NOT!

THE ILLUMINATI

BLACK BOLT
Celestial Messiah

NAMOR
Imperius Rex

REED RICHARDS
Universal Builder

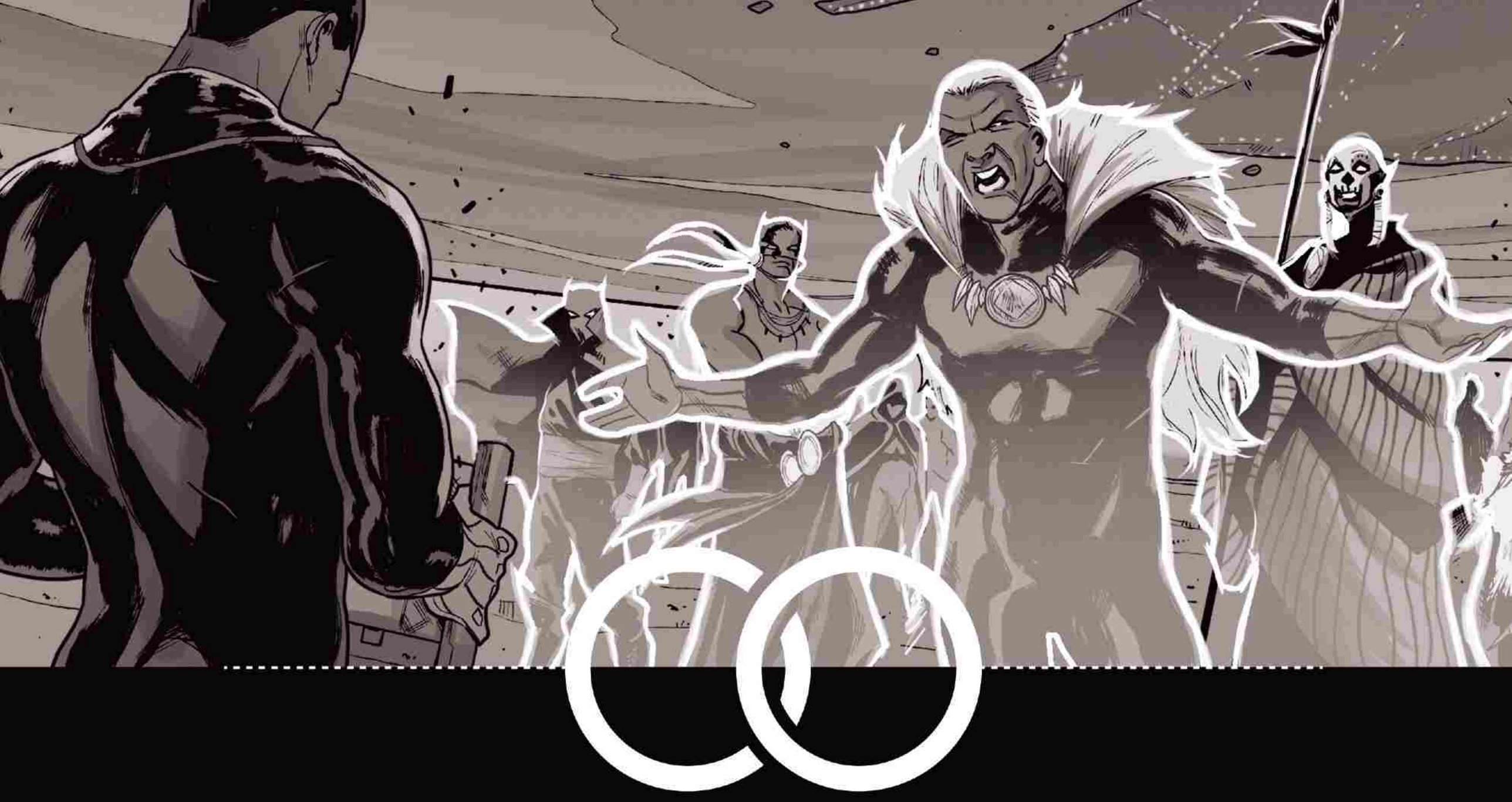
IRON MAN
Master of Machines

BEAST
Mutant Genius

DOCTOR STRANGE
Sorcerer Supreme

BLACK PANTHER
King of the Dead

HULK
Strongest There Is



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"WE ARE NOT BROTHERS"

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EARTH-4,290,001.

EARTH-616.
INCURSION ZONE.

SUCH A FRAGILE THING...

SIX POUNDS OF PRESSURE WAS ALL IT TOOK TO ACTIVATE A SWITCH, WHICH SENT AN ELECTRIC CURRENT TO A TRANSPONDER THAT THEN SENT A SIGNAL.

I WONDER... HOW IS IT THAT A SIMPLE, INANIMATE OBJECT CAN HAVE SUCH POWER OVER AN ENTIRE TAPESTRY OF LIVES?

AND THEN I REMEMBER...

THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT IT WAS MADE TO DO.

WE MADE IT TO ERASE ALL OUR LEGACIES, AND RECAST US AS SOMETHING ELSE.

YOU KNOW WHAT THIS MAKES US, DON'T YOU?

FALLEN AT BEST.

AND AT WORST...

MONSTERS, NAMOR? HAVEN'T WE SECRETLY *ALWAYS* BEEN?

MEN LORDING OVER THE LIVES OF THEIR LESSERS? I WONDER NOW...

I THINK THEY WERE.

I'M NOT A VICTIM. I'M NOT A PAWN. I CHOSE THIS.

IF THE ROAD I HAVE TRAVELED ALWAYS LED ME HERE, WERE THE CHOICES ALONG THE WAY STILL ALL MINE?

FOR THEY HAVE ALWAYS BEEN *THE DARK ARTS.*

STRANGE ISN'T WRONG. WHAT WE DID WAS WITH OPEN EYES...

BUT WE MADE OUR CHOICE-- I MADE *MY CHOICE*...AND THEN *YOU* TOOK IT FROM ME.

I DIDN'T DO THIS. *YOU DID.*

BECAUSE YOU COULDN'T.

IS THAT IT?

IS THAT ALL YOU HAVE?

AAARRGHHHH!

MY GOD... THEY'RE GOING TO KILL EACH OTHER.

UHF!

I THOUGHT WE HAD AN UNDERSTANDING, T'CHALLA...

WHACK!

NAMOR! STOP THIS!

BEFORE IT GOES TOO FAR!

TOO FAR, REED?

IS THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN SOMETHING NOW?

WAKE UP. ALL OF YOU. WE HAVE BEEN PROLONGING THIS FOR MONTHS...EACH OF US KNOWING HOW IT ENDS. EACH OF US EMBRACING-- NOT REJECTING-- IT.

I DIDN'T BELIEVE THAT. I BELIEVED WE WOULD FIND A WAY OUT.

I DIDN'T THINK IT WOULD END LIKE THIS.

THIS IS WHO WE ARE.

THEN YOU ARE A FOOL, ANTHONY.

BUT HOMO SAPIENS AS A NATURAL BORN KILLER? I LIKE TO THINK I HAD EVOLVED INTO SOMETHING MORE...

AND NOT SIMPLY SOMETHING MORE PROFICIENT.

IT DOESN'T MATTER *WHAT* WE ARE NOW, HENRY... ALL THAT MATTERS IS THAT WE ARE *RIGHT*.

THIS WAS... *OUR ONLY CHOICE...*

AND IN ALL YOUR WEAKNESS, I MADE IT FOR YOU.

SO I AM OWED YOUR THANKS.

BUUMMFF!

ARGGGH!

YOU ARE OWED ***NOTHING***. OTHER MEN DO NOT MAKE CHOICES FOR ME, NAMOR.

ESPECIALLY NOT YOU...

SHRING!

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE IS MERCY FROM ME...

AND NOW I'M ALL OUT.

ZZZRRHHHH!

THIS IS HOW YOU WILL BE REMEMBERED, NAMOR...

YOU...ON YOUR KNEES... BEFORE ME.

SSIZZZZLLL!

AARRGHHHH!

WHAAAAAAAAAAAAM!

ENOUGH.

BOTH OF YOU, END THIS RIGHT NOW.

LOOK AROUND. A TERRIBLE THING HAS BEEN DONE...AND THE GREATER TRAGEDY IS THAT WE ARE NO CLOSER TO FINDING A WAY TO STOP THIS FROM HAPPENING AGAIN.

AND MAKE NO MISTAKE...IT ***CANNOT*** HAPPEN AGAIN. BUT WE HAVE TO MOVE FORWARD...

UNDERSTAND?

IT'S DONE-- ***OVER*** WE'VE CROSSED THE RUBICON AND THERE IS NO COMING BACK. BUT IF WE ARE LOST, THEN THE ***ONE THING*** WE CAN DO IS FIND A--

I DID IT.

IT WAS ME.

WE KNOW THAT.

NO... IT. WAS. *ME.*

WHAT ARE YOU...

WHEN THE ARMIES OF THANOS CAME, THEY FOUND A BROKEN ATLANTIS--THE WORK OF WAKANDA.

THE CULL OBSIDIAN--THANOS' BLACK ORDER--WANTED THE INFINITY GEMS, AND DO YOU KNOW WHAT I DID TO SAVE WHAT WAS LEFT OF MY PEOPLE, T'CHALLA?

I TOLD A LIE.

I TOLD THANOS' GENERALS WHERE TO LOOK.

I TOLD THEM IF THEY SEARCHED IN THE MOST WRETCHED, GOD-FORSAKEN LAND ON THIS ENTIRE EARTH THEY WOULD FIND WHERE THE GEMS WERE HIDDEN.

WAKANDA.

YOU... EVEN *YOU* COULD NOT DO SUCH A THING.

OH, I DID.

AND I WOULD DO IT AGAIN.

I DROWNED YOUR PEOPLE ONCE, AND THEN WHEN THEY DARED TO RAISE THEMSELVES UP, *I BURNED THEM DOWN AGAIN.*

DO YOU KNOW WHAT I REGRET, *KING* OF THE *DEAD?*

THAT SO MANY WERE LEFT ALIVE.

BUT I WANT YOU TO KNOW ONE THING: OF THOSE THAT REMAIN...

EVERY BREATH *THEY* TAKE... IS MERCY... FROM *ME.*

RARARRRRR!

LET GO OF ME!

LET ME GO!

GET OUT OF HERE, NAMOR.

WHEN DID YOU BECOME SUCH A *MONSTER?*

HAVEN'T YOU BEEN PAYING ATTENTION, REED? WE ARE *ALL* MONSTERS NOW.

WE'VE JUST BEEN WAITING FOR THE RIGHT CIRCUMSTANCES TO REVEAL OURSELVES.

LEAVE. *NOW!*

I'M GOING TO KILL YOU, NAMOR!

IF IT'S THE ONLY THING I DO BEFORE I DIE...

I WILL KILL YOU!

"EVERYTHING DIES.

"YOU.

"ME.

"EVERYONE ON THIS PLANET.

"OUR SUN. OUR GALAXY. AND, EVENTUALLY, THE UNIVERSE ITSELF.

"THIS IS SIMPLY HOW THINGS ARE.

"IT'S INEVITABLE...

"AND I ACCEPT IT."

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07:55:24

ZONE